

become carcinogenic when they are acted upon by cytochrome P450.

There is also hope that the structure of hemes can be used to identify the heme-based enzymes that bacteria use to break down common pollutants. These enzymes could then be isolated and used for *in situ* waste remediation. The use of isolated proteins would eliminate the need to use whole bacteria to clean up wastes and thus eliminate problems associated with bacterial overgrowth.

Proposal to Boost Children's Health

In a bid to provide better protection for children's health, U.S. Senators Barbara Boxer (D-California) and Frank Lautenberg (D-New Jersey) introduced the Children's Environmental Protection Act (CEPA), on 24 May 1999. CEPA is an amendment to the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976 and seeks to protect children from exposures to hazardous substances such as toxic air pollutants and pesticides sprayed in schools. The act would also provide parents with the information necessary to make decisions about how to protect their children against such health threats.

CEPA is currently waiting for review by the Committee on Environment and Public Works. If passed, the bill would require that all U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards for environmental pollutants be set with an adequate safety margin to protect children. In introducing the bill, Boxer said, "Most [environmental and public health] standards are designed to protect adults rather than children. In most cases, we don't even have the data that would allow us to measure how those substances specifically affect children. And finally, in the face of that uncertainty, we generally assume that what we don't know about the dangers toxic and harmful substances pose to our children won't hurt them." The bill advocates acting cautiously; where there are insufficient children's health data for a particular pollutant, the EPA would assume that the pollutant presents a special risk to children and regulate it accordingly. In addition, the bill proposes steps that would protect children against pesticide use in schools, including the development of a list of the most toxic pesticides (such as developmental toxicants and known or suspected carcinogens) that would be distributed to all schools and day-care centers. Two years after enactment of CEPA, schools and day-care centers would be prohibited from using the

New Global Environmental Reporting Prize

The World Conservation Union (IUCN) announced on 5 August 1999 that an international jury will select the winner of a new global prize for excellence in environmental reporting. The first annual Reuters-IUCN Media Award will be presented by Reuters Foundation and the IUCN to honor one print journalist with an opportunity to study at Oxford University for three months. The award will cover tuition, travel, and accommodation expenses.

Reuters Foundation was established in 1982 as an educational trust to promote high standards in journalism study and training. The IUCN is the world's largest conservation-related organization and was created in 1948. Reuters Foundation and the IUCN established the awards to challenge journalists to raise the standard in environmental coverage.

"The jury will be looking for high-quality environmental reporting based on sound scientific data," said foundation director Stephen Somerville in an IUCN press release. "We want to encourage lively, responsible journalism that can make a difference, that alerts and informs both the public and the policy makers."

Regional winners will be selected by regional juries, but the global winner will be selected by a panel of conservationists and journalists. The six jurors include Queen Noor of Jordan, a patron of the IUCN; Yolanda Kakabadse, president of the IUCN; Kader Asmal, chairman of the World Commission on Dams and South Africa's minister of education; Maurice Strong, chairman of the Earth Council and rector of the United Nations University of Peace; Geoffrey Lean, a leading British journalist; and David Rogers, chief news editor at Reuters.

"Conservationists need to share their knowledge with the media while journalists have to link environmental stories with mainstream issues that affect people's lives," said Queen Noor at the IUCN's fiftieth-anniversary celebration in France last November. The winner of the Reuters-IUCN Media Award will be selected in November 1999.

Reuters Foundation and the IUCN are also collaborating to develop a program that will join experts and the media for environmental journalism workshops and symposia in the year 2000.



listed pesticides. In addition, parents would receive advance notification of in-school pesticide use.

The bill would direct the EPA to review existing standards to ensure they protect children, and to complete revisions of any standards within 15 years. The Children's Health Protection Advisory

Committee, made up of pediatricians, educators, and representatives from the community, nonprofit health organizations, industry, and state health agencies, would assist in this process by providing annual recommendations to the EPA on standards that should be reevaluated. (This committee has already been created